



Smithsonian Institution Archives

## John W. Aldrich Oral History Interviews, 1975, 1977

Finding aid prepared by Smithsonian Institution Archives

Smithsonian Institution Archives  
Washington, D.C.  
Contact us at [osiaref@si.edu](mailto:osiaref@si.edu)

# Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	1
Administrative Information .....	1
Historical Note.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Descriptive Entry.....	2
Names and Subjects .....	2
Container Listing .....	3

## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., <a href="mailto:osiaref@si.edu">osiaref@si.edu</a>
<b>Title:</b>	John W. Aldrich Oral History Interviews
<b>Identifier:</b>	Record Unit 9511
<b>Date:</b>	1975, 1977
<b>Extent:</b>	4 audiotapes (Reference copies). 7 digital .mp3 files (Reference copies).
<b>Creator::</b>	Aldrich, John W. (John Warren), 1906-1995, interviewee
<b>Language:</b>	English

---

## Administrative Information

### Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 9511, John W. Aldrich Oral History Interviews

---

## Historical Note

John Warren Aldrich (1906-1995) was a Research Associate of the Division of Birds of the National Museum of Natural History. Aldrich's interest in natural history began in his youth, with participation in bird walks and summer nature camps. After receiving his Ph.D. in biology from Brown University in 1928, Aldrich began his career at the Buffalo Museum of Science. In 1930, he joined the staff of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History as a biological assistant. Upon receipt of his Ph.D. in 1937, from Western Reserve University, Aldrich was appointed Curator of Ornithology at the Cleveland Museum. In 1941, Aldrich joined the staff of the Fish and Wildlife Service as a biologist; in 1947, he was appointed Chief of the Section of Distribution and Migration of Birds; in 1951, Chief of the Section of Distribution of Birds and Mammals; and in 1957, Staff Specialist, Branch of Wildlife Research. During his tenure with the Fish and Wildlife Service, Aldrich was located in the United States National Museum, Division of Birds, where he worked with the national collections. Because of his long association with the Division, Aldrich was appointed a Research Associate upon his retirement in 1973. Aldrich's research interests included the taxonomy of North American birds, breeding bird population studies, bird banding, bird distribution studies, ecology, endangered species, and wildlife management. Aldrich was active in many professional organizations including: the Audubon Society, American Ornithologists Union, Baird Ornithological Club of Washington, D.C., Biological Society of Washington, Cosmos Club, International Council for Bird Preservation, Washington Biologists Field Club and Wilderness Society.

---

## Introduction

The Smithsonian Institution Archives began its Oral History Program in 1973. The purpose of the program is to supplement the written documentation of the Archives' record and manuscript collections with an Oral

History Collection, focusing on the history of the Institution, research by its scholars, and contributions of its staff. Program staff conduct interviews with current and retired Smithsonian staff and others who have made significant contributions to the Institution. There are also interviews conducted by researchers or students on topics related to the history of the Smithsonian or the holdings of the Smithsonian Institution Archives.

Aldrich was interviewed for the Oral History Program because of his long professional association with the Division of Birds of the National Museum of Natural History.

---

## Descriptive Entry

Aldrich was interviewed on September 19, 1975 and April 18, 1977, by Pamela M. Henson. The interview covers his early interests in natural history; education; career in ornithology at the Buffalo Museum of Science, Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Museum of Natural History; research interests; and professional activities.

---

## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Interviews
- Oral history
- Ornithologists
- Ornithology
- Records of meetings, organizations, and professional societies

Types of Materials:

- Audiotapes
- Transcripts

Names:

- Aldrich, John W. (John Warren), 1906-1995
- Audubon Naturalist Society of the Central Atlantic States
- Baird Ornithological Club of Washington, D.C.
- Biological Society of Washington
- Buffalo Museum of Science
- Cleveland Museum of Natural History
- Cosmos Club (Washington, D.C.)
- Henson, Pamela M., interviewer
- International Council for Bird Preservation
- National Museum of Natural History (U.S.). Department of Vertebrate Zoology
- National Museum of Natural History (U.S.). Department of Zoology
- National Museum of Natural History (U.S.). Division of Birds
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Washington Biologists' Field Club
- Wilderness Society (U.S.)

---

## Container Listing

### Interviews

Interviews

#### **Interview 1: September 19, 1975**

Interviews

Covers Aldrich's early interest in natural history; education in ecology and ornithology; early work at the Buffalo Museum of Science and the Cleveland Museum of Natural History; his career with the Fish and Wildlife Service at the Section of Distribution and Migration of Birds, the Bird and Mammal Laboratories and the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center; his ornithological research interests in ecology, taxonomy of North American birds, migratory game fowl, bird banding, breed bird population studies, flyway biologists program and wildlife management; his work on *The Birds of Texas* and *The Birds of Washington*; his close associations with the United States National Museum, Division of Birds; and his participation in professional societies including the American Ornithologists Union, Baird Ornithological Club and Washington Biologists Field Club.

Interviews

Transcript, pp. 1-80, of audio recording, 2 hours.

Interviews

Recording of Interview: Total Recording Time: 2 hours

- Note:
- Original Masters: 2 5" reel-to-reel analog audiotapes
  - Preservation Masters: 4 digital .wav files
  - Reference Copies: 2 audiocassettes; 4 digital .mp3 files

Interviews

#### **Interview 2: April 18, 1977**

Interviews

Covers Aldrich's career with the Fish and Wildlife Service, including work on bird banding programs, bird distribution studies, wildlife management and endangered species protection; recollections of his colleagues including Frederick C. Lincoln, Hartley H. T. Jackson, Edward W. Nelson, and Alexander Wetmore; relations between the Bird and Mammal Laboratories of the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Division of Birds of the United States National Museum; and participation in the American Ornithologists Union, Biological Society of Washington, Cosmos Club, International Council for Bird Preservation, and Washington Biologists Field Club.

Interviews

Transcript, pp. 81-126, of audio recording, 1.5 hours.

Interviews

Recording of Interview: Total Recording Time: 1.5 hours

- Note:
- Original Masters: 2 5" reel-to-reel analog audiotapes
  - Preservation Masters: 3 digital .wav files

- Reference Copies: 2 audiocassettes; 3 digital .mp3 files